

GOD MADE THE COUNTRY

William Cowper

WILLIAM COWPER (1731-1800) may be said to be giving in his poems a foretaste of the poetry of Wordsworth. There is in his works the same deep respect for the rural life, the common people and the lovely, quiet landscape. Like Wordsworth again he did not hesitate in giving clear-cut opinion about the issues of his time.



It is a paradox that the poets and dramatists who lived in cities or state capitals have written powerfully about the beauty of the rural life. The simplicity of the common villagers engaged in humble professions, the abundance of natural life in the flora and the fauna and the peaceful living they together make have always inspired poets to write on the life in the countryside.

Cowper's poem is a classic example of this kind of writing. The first line of the poem - "God made the country and man made the town" - truly sums up the creation of the countryside and the evolution of towns. Being created in a natural way, villages possess a perfection that towns and cities can never have. Addressing the town-dwellers, the poet throws light on the virtues of the rural life and exhorts them to escape from artificial luxury and comfort to the simple, but enduring, pleasures of a village.

A. Answer the following questions briefly:

1. Do you belong to a village? Which natural scenes and objects there attract you most?
2. Do you belong to a town? What things there cause annoyance to you?

GOD MADE THE COUNTRY

God made the country, and man made the town.

What wonder then that health and virtue, gifts

That can alone make sweet the bitter draught

That life holds out to all, should most abound

And least be threatened in the fields and groves? 5

Possess ye, therefore, ye, who borne about

In chariots and sedans, know no fatigue.

But that of idleness, and taste no scenes

But such as art contrives, possess ye still

Your element; there only can ye shine; 10

There only minds like yours can do no harm.

Our groves were planted to console at noon

The pensive wanderer in their shades. At eve

The moonbeam, sliding softly in between

The sleeping leaves, is all the light they wish, 15

Birds warbling all the music. We can spare

The splendour of your lamps; they but eclipse

Our softer satellite. Your songs confound

Our more harmonious notes : the thrush departs

Scar'd, and th'offended nightingale is mute., 20

B. Answer the following questions briefly:

1. Where do you find health and virtue?
2. Where do you find fields and groves?
3. What is the source of light in villages in the evening?
4. Why is the nightingale mute in a town?

GLOSSARY AND NOTES

abound : to be in plenty

threaten : to intimidate by threats

sedan : a covered chair to be carried on poles

fatigue : exhaustion

contrive : to make something happen

pensive : sad

confound : to create confusion

thrush : a song bird

C. 1. LONG ANSWER QUESTIONS

1. Why does the poet believe that God made the country?
2. Why does the poet believe that man made the town?
3. Why is life bitter?
4. What can make our life sweet?
5. What function do groves perform in a village?
6. What are the birds scared of ? Explain.

C. 2. GROUP DISCUSSION

1. The villages are no longer beautiful and peaceful. Discuss.
2. Towns are important for the progress of civilization. Discuss?

C. 3. COMPOSITION

1. You spent your summer vacation in a village. Write a letter to a friend, telling him the things you enjoyed there.
2. Write a paragraph on the trees that are found in your village.

D. WORD STUDY

D.1. Dictionary Use

1. Correct the spelling of the following words:

abaund	kontrie	cedan
pencive	idelness	eklips

2. Complete the following sentences with the words given below:

idleness	taste	wanderer	threatened
pensive	offended	confounded	chariots

1. He _____ to beat me.
2. _____ will not let you rise in life.
3. Did you _____ the sweet dish ?
4. Like a _____ I just moved here and there.
5. Having failed at the examination, he was in a _____ mood.
6. His words _____ me and I could not give a correct reply.
7. _____ were the vehicles of gods and kings.
8. The teacher was _____ when Raju went on arguing with him.

D. 2. Word Formation

1. A number of verbs are made by simply adding - en to them in the end-

eg. threat (n) threaten (v)

haste (n)	hasten (v)
light (adj)	lighten (v)
mad (n)	madden (v)
strength (n)	strengthen (v)

Use these verbs in sentences of your own.

2. By using '-er' in the end of an adjective we give it a comparative form

eg. soft	softer
kind	kinder
sharp	sharper
thin	thinner
dark	darker
thick	thicker

Now make comparative adjectives by adding -er to the following:

big	sweet	tasty	old	out
white	black	green	small	large

D. 3. Word Meaning

Match the following words in column 'A' with their meanings given in column 'B' -

A	B
threaten	exhaustion
fatigue	natural quality
element	express a threat
spare	frightened
splendour	brilliance
scared	additional to what is required

E. GRAMMAR

On many occasions, we simply connect two sentences

by the using and -

eg. God made the country, and man made the town.

We went to the market, and we also went to the cinema.

Now join the following sentences with and -

1. Raju wrote letters. He posted them.
2. Mother cooked dinner. She served it.
3. The teacher taught the lesson. He asked us to do exercises.
4. Rajan saw a puppy in the street. He brought it home.
5. The boys were playing. They were making a noise.
6. The king gave him land. The queen gave him jewels.
7. He went to the circus. His friends went to the cinema.
8. We will go to Delhi. They will go to Jaipur.
9. My father is in the drawing room. I am in the study.

F. ACTIVITIES

1. Collect four poems in Hindi that deal with village life.
2. Write a short profile of a village you have visited / the village you belong to.

G. TRANSLATION

Translate the following into English:

1. इस फल को मत खाओ।
2. धूप में मत खेलो।
3. बाजार शाम में जाओ।

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- प्रतिदिन व्यायाम करो।
 4. नियमित रूप से अध्ययन करो।
 5. धार्मिक पुस्तकों का अध्ययन करो।
 6. कुछ समय छोटे भाई-बहनों के साथ बिताओ।
 7. रोज अखबार पढ़ो।
 8. रोज कुछ नए अंग्रेजी के शब्द सीखो।
 9. कमरे की खिड़कियाँ खोल दो।
 - 10.

